The present study out of Michigan examines the role of transportation disadvantage in the lives of criminal justice involved women. Transportation disadvantage can be characterized as a lack of access to dependable, affordable, and reliable transportation. In order to conduct this study, Bohmert used a mixed method sequential exploratory analysis with 366 women to examine the extent and distribution of transportation disadvantage for women on probation and parole. Next, 75 women were selected from the larger sample to complete in-depth interviews about the types, intensity, and importance of the transportation problems that they encountered while on community supervision.

Three complex themes emerged from participants’ experiences related to transportation: (1) disadvantage at the individual level, (2) reliance upon often unreliable personal support networks, and (3) community level needs. Analysis revealed that at the individual level, over half of the women in the sample did not have their own vehicle (68%) or a valid driver’s license (58%). Further, several individuals noted physical health issues which limited the use of alternative forms of transportation such as walking or biking. In the follow-up interviews, transportation was the most common concern of justice involved women at 43%. Interviews discovered that poorer neighborhoods, lack of social and familial supports, as well as the intensity of the transportation needs were exacerbating transportation problems for the women. Of the women interviewed, 49% reported at least one minor transportation problem, 39% reported one moderate transportation problem, and 29% reported severe problems. Transportation issues can make complying with conditions of community supervision difficult (e.g. attending probation appointments, treatment, and employment).

Practical Applications
- Consider asking probationers about their current transportation arrangements. Provide a list of affordable options for those who recognize transportation is a problem.
- Support probationers by helping them problem-solve transportation issues.
- Acknowledge that many probationers may be experiencing difficulties finding dependable transportation to and from their meetings.
- Collaborate with the probationer to find treatment, monitoring, and employment close to their home.
- Talk to probationers about who they can rely on for assistance in getting from one place to another. Help them to identify friends or family that they can turn to for assistance.
- Try to incorporate bus passes and tokens as an incentive for positive attitudes or good behavior. This can reinforce behavior while solving an existing problem.
- Use narratives to document important responsivity factors like transportation and health concerns.